

**Sunday, January 4, 2026
Epiphany of Our Lord Year A
Holy Communion 10 am**



INTRODUCTION

The feast of Epiphany (“manifestation”) concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God’s glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God’s love to all people.

***ST. PETER’S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
121 N. SPRING STREET, MIDDLETOWN, PA 17057
Sunday Worship 10:00am and Wednesday 10:00am***

**THIS IS CHRIST’S CHURCH
THERE IS A PLACE FOR YOU HERE**

St. Peter’s is a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a Reconciling in Christ congregation joining with Reconciling Works.

As a Reconciling in Christ congregation, we welcome and invite all of God’s people regardless of age, race, ethnicity, physical or mental abilities, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or economic status.

SERVING OUR CHURCH

January 4, 2026

Preaching & Presiding:

Pr. Molly Haggerty

Musicians:

Spirit & Truth

Reader:

Josh Thomas

PRELUDE: Light Of the World *by Lauren Daigle*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

MUSIC MEDITATION: This is the Air I breathe *by Michael W. Smith*

GATHER

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God,
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty Savior,
Prince of Peace.

Amen.

Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,

**we yearn for your presence to transform
our grief, pain, and despair.**

**We confess that we have not always prepared
room in our hearts for your love;**

**we have not always recognized
your presence among us;**

we have not always embraced your message of peace.

**We cry out, weary with the burden of violence,
oppression, and fear.**

**We confess our failure to make room
for those seeking refuge;**

**our participation in violent systems
that harm your innocent ones;**

our reluctance to embody your good news.

Be born in us today

and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation. Amen.

God's grace upon grace flows over you.

✠ Christ's presence redeems the whole creation.
Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad! **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN:

Angels, from the Realms of Glory ELW 275 v1-3

PRAYER OF THE DAY: O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 60:1-6

Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.

¹ Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

² For darkness shall cover the earth
and thick darkness the peoples,
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.

³ Nations shall come to your light
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

⁴ Lift up your eyes and look around;
they all gather together; they come to you;
your sons shall come from far away,
and your daughters shall be carried in their nurses' arms.

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant;
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you;
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

⁶ A multitude of camels shall cover you,
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
all those from Sheba shall come.

They shall bring gold and frankincense
and shall proclaim the praise of the Lord.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

All kings shall bow down before him. (Ps. 72:11)

¹ Give the king your jus- ¹ tice, O God,
and your righteousness to ¹ the king's son;

² **that he may rule your ¹ people righteously
and the ¹ poor with justice;**

³ that the mountains may bring prosperity ¹ to the people,
and the ¹ hills, in righteousness.

⁴ **Let him defend the needy a- ¹ mong the people,
rescue the poor, and crush ¹ the oppressor. R**

⁵ May he live as long as the sun and ¹ moon endure,
from one generation ¹ to another.

⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon ¹ the mown field,
like showers that wa- ¹ ter the earth.**

⁷ In his time may the ¹ righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall ¹ be
no more.

¹⁰ **May the kings of Tarshish and of the ¹ isles pay tribute,
and the kings of Sheba and Seba ¹ offer gifts. R**

¹¹ May all kings bow ¹ down before him,
and all the nations ¹ do him service.

¹² **For the king delivers the poor who cry out ¹ in distress,
the oppressed, and those who ¹ have no helper.**

¹³ He has compassion on the low- ¹ ly and poor,
and preserves the lives ¹ of the needy.

¹⁴ **From oppression and violence he re- ¹ deems their lives,
and precious is their blood ¹ in his sight.**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 3:1-12

What had been hidden from previous generations is now made known through the gospel ministry of Paul and others. In Christ both Jews and Gentiles participate in the richness of God's promised salvation.

¹ This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you gentiles, ² for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you ³ and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a

few words, ⁴ a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. ⁵ In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: ⁶ that is, the gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

⁷ Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ ⁹ and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, ¹⁰ so **that** through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. ¹¹ This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹² in whom we have access in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Word of God, Word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Alleluia, Give Thanks

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord

Alleluia, alleluia, give praise to His Name. (Repeat)

The Gospel according to Matthew the second chapter.

Glory to you O, Lord

GOSPEL: Matthew 2:1-12

God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.

¹ In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, ² asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." ³ When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, ⁴ and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah,

for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

YOUTH TALK: Epiphany: Oh, I get it now!

SERMON: Follow the star!

HYMN OF THE DAY: I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

ELW 815 v1-3

+PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We will say the response together.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Let us confess our faith through the Apostles’ Creed together:

APOSTLES’ CREED (*will be spoken*)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.***

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you all

C: and also with you

P: share that peace with one another

MEAL

MUSICAL OFFERING: In the Bleak Midwinter ELW 294 v1-3

OFFERING PRAYER:

God of glory,
great are your wonders among us
and many are the blessings you bestow.
Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,
through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION:

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread,
and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take
and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance
of me.

Body of Christ given for you.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all
to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for
you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the

remembrance of me.
Blood of Christ shed for you.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

LORD'S PRAYER *(will be spoken)*

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION:

God is now in flesh appearing.

Come to the feast of joy!

*All are invited to share in communion. It is Christ's table and all are welcome. The
Ushers will bring you forward. The Pastor will give you the bread and the
communion assistant will have a tray of wine. Please take one cup and drink it.*

COMMUNION SONGS: The First Noel ELW 300

What Child Is This ELW 296

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION:

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table.

May we treasure this gift and ponder in our hearts
the mystery of your presence.

Move us to discover the wonders of your love
in the everyday moments of our lives,
through Christ born in us. **Amen.**

SEND

BLESSING:

The triune God,
glorious Mystery,
holy Incarnate One,
abiding Comforter,
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.
Amen.

Standing is optional.

SENDING SONG: This Little Light of Mine ELW 677 v1-3

DISMISSAL:

Glory to God in the highest!
And peace to God's people on earth!
Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: Rainbow Connection *from The Muppet Movie*

The Altar flowers are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Christiana Crouse by Carol "Porr", in memory of Clara Stoops by the Stoops Family, and in memory of Ralph and Frances Thompson- his parents by Ray Thompson.

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St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Middletown is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Susquehannock peoples and we give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this place their home.

St. Peter's News

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE: New to our prayer list this month: Paula, Michele, Amelia, Nolan Smith, Debbie Goodling, Gary Fichthorn, James Spedden, Jaiden Mullins, Jimmy & Cece Abromitis, Lynda Fitzpatrick.

Those friends and members in need of continued prayers: John Ziats, Josie Brewster, Richard Brandt, Michelle, Milton, Bruce, Jim White, Tina Polito, Patty & John Stewart, Karen Eckles, Barbara Henry, Emily Booth, Lucinda Sheaffer.

****SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES****

Justin Polito, Corbin Stetler, Gabriel Goldsborough, Jordane Mondeaux, Anthony Mondeaux, Edgar Lopez, John Pappas, Colton Stone, Aaron Williams

Family Promise Volunteers Needed January 11-18, 2026.

There are still spots available to help us serve the families in their time of need. If you are willing to host, prepare a meal or drive the van, go to the following link to sign up!

<https://tinyurl.com/FPJanuary>

Altar Guild Volunteers

We are looking for people who are willing to help prepare communion, altar and banners as needed. Please contact Molly or Sharon if you are willing to volunteer.

Ministries of St. Peter's Lutheran Church

Church Ministries

Sewing Ladies	Tues 9-11:30 am
Bible Study	Wed 11:00 am
Justice Book Club	contact Marianne Moore
TOGETHER Hope garden	contact Shannon Kelly
Holy Huddle - lunch & faith	One Sunday per month

Outreach Ministries

Community Meals	Tues 6 pm
TOGETHER Afterschool	Wed 3-5:30 pm
Parent Pod	Thurs 9:30-11 am
Food & Clothing Pantry	Mon-Thurs 9-11:30 am
Meals on Wheels	contact Don Hossler
Family Promise	contact Pr Molly Haggerty
Summer Fun & Lunch	June-Aug

Community Partners

Hope Academy PA	Mon-Fri
MAHS Life Skills students	Mon-Thurs
Middletown Area Library	Summer Fun
Middletown School District	Summer Fun
Women, Infant & Children	Mon-Fri
Amanda Ruzansky Counseling	by appointment
Lower Susquehanna Synod	
Middletown Borough	

ST. PETER'S STAFF

Everyone Serving and Caring for Others

Rev. Molly Haggerty	Pastor
Shannon Kelly	Coordinator of TOGETHER
Bennett Williams	Coordinator of Music
Shannon Kelly	Office Administration
Hope Pankake	Visitation Chaplain
Sharon Beard	Coord. of Congregational Care
John Ponnett	Treasurer
Kendra Darrah	Financial Secretary
Andy Wren	Council President

Church Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 am. Monday – Thursday

Enter through the Community Center doors

Phone Number: (717) 944-4651

Web site: www.stpetersmiddletown.org

E-mail address: ParishMail@stpetersmiddletown.org

WMSS 91.1FM broadcasts our service at 11am.

Facebook livestream: St Peter's Lutheran Church Middletown

